CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Press Release

October 10, 2006
Contact: Jennifer Morcone
404-639-1690

CDC Awards $5.2 Million to Evaluate Community Strategies to Reduce Impact of Pandemic Influenza

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today announced $5.2 million in new cooperative agreements designed to evaluate the effectiveness of community-level measures that could be used during an influenza pandemic to reduce the spread of infection.

Because developing a vaccine against a pandemic influenza strain could take several months, community prevention strategies that don't involve vaccines or other drugs (also called "non-pharmaceutical interventions") may serve as a first line of defense to help delay or reduce the spread of disease. However, little scientific research currently exists on the effectiveness and potential impact of such strategies. Therefore, these studies are designed to identify and evaluate quickly what kinds of non-pharmaceutical strategies, alone or in combination, may help reduce or contain the spread of pandemic influenza.

"While we can't predict the severity of an influenza pandemic before it begins, our ability to effectively respond will depend on how well communities and states can take steps to reduce spread of disease," said CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "Our challenge now is to determine which community-level measures will work best to limit the spread of infection."

Community prevention strategies are public health measures other than drugs, which are aimed at reducing the spread of disease. For pandemic influenza, examples include simple infection control measures such as hand washing, cough etiquette and mask use; social distancing strategies that involve reducing contact with other people including closing schools or workplaces and canceling large public gatherings; voluntary isolation of cases; and voluntary quarantine of household contacts.

The studies and their principal investigators are:

- Effectiveness of Selective Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions in Reducing Influenza-Like Illness Among University Students
  Tomas Aragon, M.D., University of California, Berkeley, CA

- Pittsburgh Influenza Prevention Project
  Donald Burke, M.D. and Sam Stebbins, M.D., University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

- Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions for Pandemic Influenza
  Scott Holmberg, M.D., RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC

- A Controlled Trial of Masks and Hand Hygiene for Reducing Influenza Transmission
  Gabriel Leung, M.D. University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

- Reducing Transmission of Influenza by Face Masks

Arnold Monto, M.D. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

- Stopping Upper Respiratory Infections and Influenza in the Family: The Stuffy Trial
  Elaine Larson, Ph. D. Columbia University, New York, NY

- Pandemic Influenza Control at the Borders of Island Countries and in Households
  Michael Baker, M.D. University of Otago, Otago, New Zealand

- Evaluation of Masks as a Source Control Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention
  Donald Milton, M.D. Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, Lowell, MA

For more information about CDC's efforts to prepare for pandemic influenza, please visit www.pandemicflu.gov.

###

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES